

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 10858 222155Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8096

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S E C R E T BOGOTA 10858

EXDIS

PANAMA FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, CASC, SOCI, CO

SUBJ: KDINAPPING OF AMERICAN EXECUTIVE: GUSTAVO CURTIS

SITREP 16

REF: BOGOTA 10788

1. ON OCT 21, JAMES RAISBECK, ATTORNEY FOR INDUSTRIAS GRAN COLOMBIA, RECEIVED TWO ENVELOPES IN THE LOCAL MAIL. ONE ENVELOPE CONTAINED TWO LETTERS FROM CURTIS TO HIS WIFE, ONE DATED OCT 11 AND THE OTHER DATED OCT 15. THE SECOND ENVELOPE CONTAINED A CRYPTIC

MESSAGE AND A PAGE FROM A LOCAL NEWSPAPER.

2. IN THE OCT 11 LETTER CURTIS COMPLAINED OF MENTAL ANGUISH BUT SAID HE WAS BEING TREATED WELL. HE EMPHASIZED HIS DESIRE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS BE CONDUCTED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. HE DWELT ON RELIGION AND PRAYING, ALTHOUGH MRS. CURTIS LATER SAID THAT NEITHER SHE NOR HER HUSBAND ARE RELIGIOUSLY INCLINED. THE REMAINDER OF THE LETTER CONTAINED INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAYING FAMILY BILLS, EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH IN GRUN'S ABILITY TO HANDLE THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND PERSONAL COMMENTS TO HIS WIFE.

3. IN THE OCT 15 LETTER, CURTIS SAID THAT HE WAS AWARE

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THAT PROOF THAT HE WAS BEING HELD BY THE KIDNAPPERS HAD BEEN

REQUESTED AND THAT INFORMATION KNOWN ONLY TO HIMSELF, HIS WIFE, AND GRUN WAS BEING SENT. AS IN THE FIRST LETTER, HE REFERRED TO HIS MENTAL SUFFERING. HE STRESSED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS BE CARRIED OUT WITH MINIMUM INTERFERENCE AND SUGGESTED THAT ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE OBTAINED FROM VARIOUS INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS. HE AGAIN MADE REFERENCE TO HIS DEEP RELIGIOUS FAITH.

4. THE CRYPTIC MESSAGE AND THE PAGE FROM A LOCAL NEWSPAPER ARE THOUGHT BY NEGOTIATORS TO BE MEANT AS PROOF THAT CURTIS IS IN THE HANDS OF THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE MADE TELEPHONIC CONTACT. THE MESSAGE, IN SPANISH, READS "THE CHIEF OF CARCASONNE HAS A MOUSTACHE AND HIS FIRST NAME IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF HIS WIFE." AFTER READING THE MESSAGE LOMANTO TOLD ADAMS-DALE THAT IT WAS MOST LIKELY A REFERENCE TO ANDRE JOB, CURTIS' SUPERVISOR IN FLORIDA. JOB HAS VACATIONED IN CARCASONNE, FRANCE, SEVERAL TIMES, HE HAS A MOUSTACHE, AND HIS WIFE'S NAME IS AUDRY. THE NEWSPAPER PAGE WAS DATED OCT 16 AND CARRIED WHAT LOOKED TO BE CURTIS' SIGNATURE ALONGSIDE A WORD IN A COMMERCIAL AD WHICH MEANS "TO LIVE".

5. ADAMS-DALE HAS SHOWN THE CRYPTIC MESSAGE AND THE NEWSPAPER PAGE TO DAS OFFICIALS BUT HAS NOT SHOWN OR TOLD THEM ABOUT THE TWO LETTERS. HE ASKED RSO FOR A RECOMMENDATION ON THE ADVISABILITY OF SHOWING THE LETTERS TO DAS. RSO REITERATED THAT WE ARE PROHIBITED FROM ADVISING HIM ON SUCH MATTERS AND THAT DECISION RESTED WITH HIM AND COMPANY.

6. WE INFORMED ADAMS-DALE OF KLIEN'S REQUEST (DREXLER-COX TELECON OF OCT22) THAT EMBASSY USE ITS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES TO TRANSMIT BRIEFING PAPER PREPARED BY ADAMS-DALE (SITREP 15). AFTER EXAMINING THE BRIEFING MATERIAL, HOWEVER, WE FOUND THAT IT INCLUDES EXTENSIVE DETAILS ON HANDLING THE RANSOM NEGOTIATIONS. WE THEREFORE HAVE INFORMED ADAMS-DALE THAT, BECAUSE OF THE GUIDELINES WE MUST FOLLOW, OUR FACILITIES CANNOT BE USED. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT HE TRANSMIT THE MATERIALS BY OTHER MEANS USING THE CODE WHICH HE CREATED FOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH KLEIN.
SANCHEZ

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